

OFF-ROAD VEHICLE (ORV) TRAILS ADVISORY BOARD MEETING
Holiday-Inn Lansing West
7501 West Saginaw Highway
Lansing, Michigan
May 10, 2006

Chairman Ranney called the meeting of the Off-Road Vehicle (ORV) Trails Advisory Board to order at 6:35 p.m. on Wednesday, May 10, 2006 in Lansing, Michigan.

Members Present:

Dick Ranney, Chair
Glenn Moll, Vice Chair
Jason Dinsmore
Larry Harrington
John Bernard
Peter Wyckoff

Member Absent:

Sheriff Terry Johnson

Staff Present:

Steve Kubisiak, Forest, Mineral and Fire Management (FMFM), Lansing
Jim Radabaugh, FMFM, Lansing
Steve DeBrabander, FMFM, Lansing
Richard Kennedy, FMFM, Lansing
Mark Mandenberg, FMFM, Lansing
Katie Campbell, FMFM, Cadillac
Courtney Borgondy, FMFM, Gladwin
Lynne Boyd, Chief, FMFM, Lansing
Lieutenant Creig Grey, Law Enforcement Division (LED), Lansing
Lieutenant Nick Heary, LED, Roscommon
Pete Lundborg, Parks and Recreation, Mears

USDA Forest Service Staff Present:

Ms. Rose Ingram, Huron-Manistee National Forest, Cadillac

Mr. Ranney announced a public comment period will be held at the end of the meeting. Those wishing to speak should fill out a card and will be allotted three minutes. The intent of the public appearance portion of the meeting is to take public comment on the ORV program. Committee members and Department staff are available before and after the meeting to answer questions.

Mr. Ranney recognized Mel Lill, one of the founding members of the Cycle Conservation Club of Michigan, for his contribution to building Michigan's ORV trail system.

Mr. Ranney added the following item under New Business; **Michigan Motorized Recreation Council Proposal -- R.J. Witte**

MINUTES

Acknowledged Minutes of the February 8, 2006, ORV Trails Advisory Board Meeting.

Mr. Harrington made a motion, supported by Mr. Dinsmore, to accept the minutes of the February 8, 2006 Off-Road Vehicle Trails Advisory Board Meeting. Motion unanimously carried.

INTRODUCTION

Lieutenant Grey introduced Lieutenant Nick Heary and announced he will be attending future ORV Trails Advisory Board meetings. **Mr. Ranney** welcomed Lt. Heary and stated he looks forward to working with him.

OLD BUSINESS

ORV Plan/Boiler Plate Report Update – **Mr. Radabaugh** reported program staff has compiled comments from the divisions on the draft ORV plan, and have drafted a preliminary Department response to each of the plan recommendations. Comments from the FMFM Management Team are under review and are being incorporated. The plan will be coordinated with the boiler plate report. The next step will be to present the plan to the Statewide Council. Then it will go to the Director and Natural Resources Commission (NRC) for information and action. He noted there will be another opportunity for public comment when the plan is presented to the NRC for information.

Mr. Radabaugh reported the boiler plate report, required by the Legislature regarding a plan to expand the ORV trail system by 25% over the next four years, is under development. A 25% increase would equate to 796 miles at an annual expansion rate of 199 miles per year for 4 years. He noted the challenge of balancing trail expansion on state forest lands with forest certification. Sponsor advocates will be critical to this undertaking. Their advocacy and willingness to maintain and expand riding opportunities will be a key component of this initiative. Partnerships with local units of government and private landowners to secure lands or trail easements will also be needed. Partnerships with commercial advocates, manufacturers and dealers will also be encouraged to work with local units of government to secure lands or trail easements. A copy of the boiler plate report will be provided to the Board upon finalization and submission to the Legislature.

Mr. Ranney noted the need to review funding needs to support trail expansion, and appointed a taskforce to develop a 10 year funding plan. Taskforce members are: Dick Ranney, Larry Harrington and John Bernard.

Forest Certification ORV Taskforce Update – **Steve DeBrabander** provided a status report. The taskforce has eleven members and is charged with defining a Department-wide strategy to address illegal ORV damage. The strategy will address 3 fronts: 1) user education; 2) enforcement; and 3) maintenance/restoration. The taskforce met three times and is working on the third draft of the recommendations. The recommendations will be presented to the FMFM Management Team and Statewide Council. The strategy will be defined by June 30, 2006. **Mr. DeBrabander** noted that the ORV community will need to take a big part in this initiative, and that it is in everyone's best interest to get illegal ORV damage under control or risk de-certification.

Mr. DeBrabander answered questions. Discussion ensued. It was suggested that education efforts also be coordinated with the forest industry and schools.

Mr. Ranney thanked Mr. DeBrabander.

Gladwin Trail Update – **Courtney Borgondy, Unit Manager, Gladwin Forest Management Unit** announced that the Department plans to reopen the middle loop of the Gladwin Off-Road Vehicle trail on Friday, May 26, in time for Memorial Day weekend. The middle loop consists of approximately 14

miles of trail located just north of Highway M-61 in Gladwin County. He reported that portion of the Gladwin ORV trail has been closed since 2004 due to severe flooding and trail degradation. Since then, the Department has made numerous repairs to the middle loop including trail hardening, culverts and erosion control improvements. Several more projects are scheduled for completion in 2006, to address additional environmental issues relating to illegal trails and scramble areas adjacent to the trail system. He also noted several timbers sales are planned and tree tops will be scattered to help restore several ORV damaged sites.

The Cycle Conservation Club is planning a work-bee on May 20 and 21 to sign and brush the middle loop. Interested volunteers should contact R.J. Witte. The remainder of the trail, which lies the farthest north of M-61 and is commonly referred to as the North Loop, is still under evaluation and is not scheduled to reopen at this time. **Mr. Borgondy** thanked Mr. Witte and Ms. Campbell, and answered questions. Discussion ensued regarding the north loop and a potential reroute around Sand Creek. **Mr. Ranney** thanked Mr. Borgondy.

NEW BUSINESS

Michigan Motorized Recreation Council (MMRC) Proposal -- **R.J. Witte** said the MMRC is comprised of various ORV user groups in Michigan, and does not have officers, directors, constitution, bylaws or dues. The MMRC acts as a communications network and meets on an as needed basis to discuss ORV issues. He presented a power point presentation proposing a 725 mile expansion of the designated ORV trail system. The proposal includes: 1) Parallel the heavily used trail systems with 24 inch trail; 2) Increase the size of selected 24 inch trail to 50 inches; 3) Connect and add to the 72 inch routes and create new 72 inch routes; and 4) Connect trail systems close to each other with a linear trail.

Mr. Kubisiak reviewed the Department's trail proposal process and the need for sponsor advocates to take a lead role in the process.

Discussion ensued regarding MMRC's proposal.

Mr. Ranney made a motion, supported by Mr. Dinsmore, to embrace the concept as presented by the Michigan Motorized Recreation Council. Motion unanimously carried.

Recreation Trails Program Overview -- **Mark Mandenberg** provided an overview of the Recreation Trails Program (RTP) and the Recreation Improvement Fund (RIF) Program. He reviewed criteria, eligibility, application process and Advisory Committee requirements. Clubs should work with their field contacts to identify projects for funding consideration. Approximately \$2.5 million dollars have been awarded to ORV projects from the RTP since 1992. He answered questions. **Chairman Ranney** thanked Mr. Mandenberg.

Green Spade Award – **Chairman Ranney** asked Lynne Boyd, Chief, Forest, Mineral and Fire Management to share the honor of presenting the Green Spade award to the Lansing Motorcycle Club. Mr. Thomas Dunn accepted the award on behalf of the club and was recognized for planting 4,500 trees in an hour and a half near the Leetsville ORV Trailhead last Arbor Day. **Ms. Boyd** acknowledged the Department's great partnership with the Lansing Motorcycle Club and noted the project restored a site that was damaged by illegal ORV use. **Mr. Dunn** thanked the Department for providing the trees and making the furrows. Mr. Dunn is a member of the Forest Advisory Committee. **Chairman Ranney** extended the challenge for more clubs to get involved next year.

STAFF REPORTS

Law Enforcement – **Lt. Grey** reported Scott Berg accepted a new job outside state employment and they are working on a back-up plan to fill the vacancy. A contractor has been hired, and the Department is finalizing the safety training curriculum. A workgroup meeting will be scheduled. New ORV handbooks are available, and a letter concerning forest certification is included. **Lt. Grey** asked for support from trail riding organizations to report environmental damage by calling 1-800-292-7800.

Mr. Ranney expressed concern with filling the Training Coordinator vacancy in a timely manner, and urged the Department to make this a priority.

Forest, Mineral and Fire Management – **Steve Kubisiak** announced ORV grant applications for the 2007 season will be available beginning June 1, and due August 1, 2006. He noted funds are available for damage restoration and urged the clubs to work with their field contacts to identify potential projects for funding consideration.

Mr. Kubisiak reported the Department has endorsed, in concept, the recommendation made by the Snowmobile Advisory Committee for a standard trail emergency sign. He noted it is a voluntary program and the trail club is responsible to post, sign and maintain the sign locations, in cooperation with the local emergency 911 dispatchers, at no expense to the state trails program. He held-up a sample sign and referred the Board to the information in their packets for more details.

US Forest Service – **Rose Ingram** reported on the Hugh's Lake fire. The Meadows campground and the ORV trail that leads into it are temporarily closed due to fire damage and hazardous trees. The Forest Service is working on a rehabilitation plan, and the campground will remain closed until repairs can be made.

PUBLIC APPEARANCE

Mark Smith said Scott Berg made good progress on the ORV safety education program and he is sorry to see him go. He is hopeful there will be a replacement soon so the program does not stall. He relayed a story of someone riding illegally on state lands and the need for public education.

Paul Mulder, Great Lakes Four Wheel Drive said he has doubts about proposals to expand the trail system and that routes do not meet the needs of trail users. He believes that the lack of well maintained, challenging trails contribute to illegal use. He is critical of the sign program and the Department's efforts to make improvements at the St. Helen Motorsports Area.

Mr. Bill Gilbert, Michigan ATV Safety Association read a statement from Chief Boyd and Chief Marble regarding forest certification and the need for the riders to stay on designated trails, and to report violations and environmental damage. He is critical of the safety education program and instructor training. He said he attended a course conducted by a Conservation Officer and there was no mention of environmental ethics or trail information.

Dana Smith, ATV Off-Road Club said a letter from the Attorney General concerning ORV access routes on local roads is circulating on the internet, and asked if there will be a change in law enforcement. **Lt. Heary** said the Department will not change its current enforcement posture until the issue is resolved, and noted that when there are significant changes in the law they are phased-in to allow for public education. **Mr. Smith** supports ORV operation on roads.

Mr. Ranney moved to adjourn, supported by Mr. Dinsmore. Motion unanimously carried.

Meeting adjourned at 9:30 pm.

Next Meeting:

August 9, 2006, Lansing Holiday-Inn West

Public Present:

Bill Gilbert, MI ATV Safety Association	Ernie Brooks
Jim Kunath	Bruce Suvan, ATV Off-Road Club of MI
Dana Smith, ATV Off-Road Club of MI	Sue Thrushman, ATV Off-Road Club of MI
Steve Johnson, ATV Off-Road Club of MI	Kevin Drnad, ATV Off-Road Club of MI
Steve Mullins, ATV Off-Road Club of MI	Tom Gallagher, MI Rec. Vehicle Riders Assoc.
Wes Meeuwsen, Two-Trackers 4 Wheel Drive	Mel & Mary Lill, Cycle Conservation Club (CCC)
Ari Adler, Great Lakes 4WD Association	Thomas Dunn, AMA D-14
Marc Smith, ASI	Jeff Traynor, Two-Tracker 4WD
Paul Mulder, Great Lakes 4WD Assoc (GLFWDA)	Pat Kinne, GLFWDA
Richard Rondeau, Off-Road Venture	Brad Nosler, Off-Road Venture
Pat Brower, 2 Trackers 4WD Club	Mark Burns, GLFWDA
Steve Gradowski, GLFWDA	Lewis Shuler, CCC
RJ Witte, CCC	Chuck Smith, ATV Off-Road Club